Wednesday
May 30, 2018

TODAY **98/75** Mostly sunny

THURSDAY **99/75** Mostly sunny

FRIDAY **100/75** Mostly sunny

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METRO & STATE, B1

A DAY AT SCHOOL WITH AN AUSTIN TEACHER

AUSTIN360, D1

TABLE TALK

10 years of lessons learned by food writer

SPORTS, C1

GOLDEN: BACK TO DRAWING BOARD FOR ROCKETS

STATESMAN IN-DEPTH AUSTIN SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

As suspensions cut, concern raised

AUSTIN DISTRICT HOME SUSPENSIONS

2016-17
Total home suspensions: 5,395
High school: 1,690
Middle school: 3,262
Elementary school: 443

2017-18*
Total home suspensions: 3,675
High school: 1,225
Middle school: 2,229
Elementary school: 221

SOURCE: AUSTIN SCHOOL DISTRICT
*DATA THROUGH APRIL 11, THE MOST RECENT AVAILABLE

Some teachers say they aren't getting support they need from administrators.

By Melissa B. Taboada
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Fewer Austin students are being removed from class for disciplinary reasons, as district leaders attempt to move away from traditional punishments that hinder their learning and keep students in school instead.

Administrators handed out 3,675 home suspensions this school year, 32 percent fewer than last year. The data from mid-April, the most recent available, show the district will meet its target of under 5,000. The number of in-school suspensions fell to 3,904, a 13 percent drop. There also was a decrease in repeat offenders.

But some teachers are voicing concerns that keeping disruptive kids in class prevents the rest of the students from learning and that there still is not enough support to work with intemperate students and escalating behaviors

Suspensions continued on **A12**

STATESMAN IN-DEPTH STATE SPENDING

Remote military school risks closure

Challenge Academy struggles with location, funding, staff turnover.

By Eric Dexheimer
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Source: maps4news.com/©HERE STAFF

In 2007, the Texas Youth Commission's boot camp for juvenile offenders in Sheffield, a sparsely populated community in remote West Texas, was facing a crisis.

The facility had long struggled to attract and keep staff. But with barely a third of its correctional officer positions filled, the agency (since renamed the Texas Juvenile Justice Department) was forced to relocate dozens of young inmates to other facilities. Months later, with fewer than two dozen teens remaining at the 128-bed facility, administrators decided to shutter it.

It didn't remain empty for long. In September 2008, with Hurricane Ike churning toward it, the Challenge Academy, a basic-training-like school for struggling high school students operated by the Texas Military Department, made an emergency dash from its Galveston location to the Sheffield campus.

It was supposed to be temporary quarters. But a decade on, the academy remains at the isolated site. Today, in a case of government déjà vu, the school is facing

School continued on **A10**

TEXAS POLITICS

GOP moderates may temper caucus' House speaker pick

By Johnathan Silver
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The results in key GOP Texas House runoffs last week promise to reverberate later this year, when House Republicans meet to select a preferred candidate for House speaker.

In a handful of Republican runoff contests, moderates prevailed over more conservative candidates, which could favor a choice more in line with retiring Speaker Joe Straus, R-San Antonio, who was a bulwark against socially conservative legislation such as bills limiting bathroom use for transgender people.

The runoffs, said Mark Jones, a political science professor at Rice University, "kept the balance of power within the House from moving more to the right than where it was."

The November general election also will be a test for moderate Republicans, with the party expected to lose as few as one or two seats and as many as 10 seats in the House, Jones said. Moderate Republicans hold most of those

Texas House speaker candidates include Phil King (top left), John Zerwas (top right), Tan Parker (bottom left), Eric Johnson (bottom right).

competitive seats, including an open one in Williamson County.

Republicans hold a 94-55 edge in the House, so they aren't in danger of losing their majority.

But the results in those races matter because House Republicans agreed last year to meet this December, before the next regular session starts, to select the party's

Speaker continued on **A11**

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Four months after the devastation of Hurricane Maria, a third of the population was still without power. Puerto Rico's official government death toll for the September hurricane stands at 64. A Harvard study published Tuesday says at least 4,645 people died as a result of the storm. CAROLYN COLE / LOS ANGELES TIMES

Study: Maria's toll is in the thousands

Official toll is 64; Harvard researchers count 4,645.

By Arelis R. Hernández and Laurie McGinley
Washington Post

CAGUAS, PUERTO RICO — At least 4,645 people died as a result of Hurricane Maria and its devastation across Puerto Rico last year, according to a new Harvard study released Tuesday, an estimate that far exceeds the official government death toll, which stands at 64.

The study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, found that health-care disruption for the elderly and the loss of basic utility services for the chronically ill had significant impacts across the U.S. territory, which was thrown into chaos after the September hurricane wiped out the electrical grid and had widespread impacts on infrastructure. Some communities were entirely cut off for weeks amid road closures and communications failures.

HURRICANE MARIA DEATH TOLL ESTIMATES
16 – Reported Sept. 25 by Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello
64 – Revised figure reported Dec. 9 by the island's Department of Public Safety
4,645 – Estimated in Harvard University study published Tuesday in the New England Journal of Medicine

Researchers in the United States and Puerto Rico, led by scientists at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, calculated the number of deaths by surveying nearly 3,300 randomly chosen households across the island and comparing the estimated post-hurricane death rate to the mortality rate for the year before.

"Our results indicate that the official death count of 64 is a substantial underestimate of the true burden of mortality after Hurricane Maria," the authors wrote.

The official death estimates have drawn sharp criticism from experts and local residents, and the new study criticized Puerto Rico's methods for counting the dead - and its lack of transparency in sharing information - as detrimental to planning for future natural disasters. The authors called for patients, communities and doctors to develop contingency plans for natural disasters.

Death toll continued on **A12**

'ROSEANNE' CANCELED
Star's racist tweet moves ABC to drop its hit reboot after one season, **A4**

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NATION & WORLD, A11

U.S. moves ahead with trade measures on China

Plans are to impose 25% tariffs on $50B worth of imported Chinese goods within the next month.

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